THE CHARLES VIEWER

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The Charles Viewer

Prose and Poetry from the Students of Fisher College, 1998

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The 1998 edition of ***The Charles Viewer*** represents the work of students from the Day and continuing Education divisions of Fisher College. In assembling this work, we sought materials which represent a diverse variety of themes, though much of the writing contained here pertains to relationships-- families, friends, and children-- and their impact on our lives.

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KITCHEN

To My Mother

Don't stop dancing barefoot in the kitchen.
Don't stop holding my hand and pleading
for me to show you how to dance.
Don't stop spinning me on the oak floor
that around dinner time always seems to
be scattered with parsley.
Don't take away the pink tulips
you have placed in the glass vase
above the sink.
I'll just sit here, my legs dangling
from the marble counter and watch you.
I'll drink my glass of wine
with you and tell you how I am.
Don't shut the door, the breeze
feels nice. Don't try
to teach me how to cook.
I like it when you make things for me
Don't answer the phone, I'd rather
talk to you.
Don't move your books and magazines
and mail off the counter. I like it when
you leave pieces of you lying around.
Don't stop telling me you love me,
that I will always be your little one. but empty
the dishwasher anyway.
Always keep the doors to the kitchen open.
It's the warmest room in the house.

Paige Washburn

WORDS FOR MY BROTHER

When I close my eyes I see you
tall, proud, protective.
You watched over us for years
always a hint of fear
in your inky blue eyes
as if we were about to be
snatched up
and taken away from our youth. You were afraid
of the day our golden pigtails would be
unleashed,
the day we would stop riding on your wide
strong shoulders. I can see you
looking at us, your pink lips curved in a smile. The small
escape of laughter reached our ears and
filled us with happiness. One by one the innocence
faded, though you tried to hold on. Your hands reached
and grasped and pulled and finally let
go.
And you said good-bye and walked away.

Paige Washburn

SPARE CHANGE

With this two dollars
I will feed my children, spare the heat, and fuel the lights.
I will mend the cracked ceiling that's caught in the mouth of the tub.
I will clean my skin and clothes, and dress my children.
I will get to work and back, empty pockets and empty hands.
With these two dollars I will carry the children across town
to cure their flu.
I will wash the babies and lay them down.
I will make love like a new thing with no inhibition.
With these two dollars I will press the pants and shirts with pleats
and change old clothes into this week's sheets.
I will hold hands and say grace,
and be thankful for the extraordinary span of eight quarters.

Natasha Cornin

AS WE WALK

As we walk in the middle of the road of Destiny
We see ourselves in high-rise self-esteem
Walking the path of Eternity.
Where life goes on beyond us
Through shades of darkness and a bright
streak of sun. We will carry on.
Our pride lifts us, raises us, propels us forth.
No matter what, we will be strong!

Janette Chaparro

FREE TO BE

Free to be born,
to be an infant,
a toddler
a pre-teen,
an adolescent
Free to grow up,
to be a young lady
a girlfriend, a fiance
a wife, a mother

Free to change diapers fifteen times
a day, to wake up every two hours to breast feed.
Free to get the husband ready and off to work, to
send the children to school. Free to do the laundry,
wash the dishes, to sweep and mop the floors, to
put away the children's toys, to pick up the husband's
work clothes from the night before. Free to help
the children with their homework, to listen, to cook
the meals, set the table, feed the family, clean
up afterwards. Free to bathe the children, get their
pajamas, tuck them in bed, read them a story, kiss them
good night. Free to get the bath ready for the husband,
to get his clothes, to massage his shoulders, his
back, his feet. Free to satisfy the husband's sexual
desires, his ego, his wants and needs. Free to see
the husband and children in peaceful slumber.

Free to be -- a wife and mother.

Marie Perez

PUBLIC GARDEN

TRIBUTE FOR MY MOTHER

At a time when I was small
Do you remember
any of it at all?
Maybe if you ignore it,
Tuck it away,
Painful memories won't harm anymore
Or for now anyway.
Mom, you've borne this burden
So long
It's time now to speak of that man
So strong
Who bit his way to our hearts
And sucked out the feeling
I've held my heart together for so long
But there's no prospect of healing
Unless we face the past
Because mother I remember it all
And my heart needs a cast.

Gina Calderoni

It's cold along the Charles River.
Sun already disappeared.
A silent moment in Bean Town.

Chie Takeuchi

As you walked away from me.
As I looked at the tower --
Two moments I'll never forget

Whitney Woodman

The beautiful sunshine
comes through the broken blind
to wake me up.

Noirko Suita

Your Baby Girl

I haven't seen you
Since you held my mother
Against your naked body
Creating me cell by cell
Your baby girl
I am everything my mother is not
I would like to see you once dad

I want you to know
I go to the harbor and look at the boats
Knowing you came over on one
I always hoped you'd be in the one I stared at
I would like to see you once dad

The tea you left my mother is bitter
I can't stand to drink it
Perhaps you are not big on tea
But I would like to drink tea with you
I would like to see you dad

Mom doesn't talk much about you
When I think about you
You must understand
That hurts
I would like to get to know you
and you me -- your little girl
I would like to see you once dad

I would imagine your hair
Is changing color by now
Do you wonder what color my hair is?
Brown, dad. The same chocolate brown
As my mother's.
I just want you to see me once dad

I am almost twenty am in college
I have a good plan, a bright future
I have a lot of things, dad
Except for you.

Marcia Larrabee

September Water

Sometimes when I look at you.
I wonder why you are not as tall as you used to be
After morning kindergarten.
You packed us peanut-butter and jelly
and we walked to the beach.
When I watch you
I know that if I look deep within your cocoa eyes
I can still feel the sensation I get
when you held me in your arms
and spun me on the shore
If I look deep enough
I can remember the September water
as it sprayed off my feet, then above our heads
baptizing us mother and child.
When you were tall
your skin glowed
and I never needed a night light after you tucked me in.
During those years
the rows of strawberry patch seemed endless,
the tractor ride was my bumpiest endeavor,
and the jam you made was never so sweet.
Between the water that splashed my feet
and the jam that sparkled in the sun like red sugar crystals
I cannot tell you which one I am most fond of.
But I know that I am taller than you now
and someday
I must live up to the September water.

Kelley Bryant

Winter in the city;
the streets are cold and barren
awaiting the first snow.

Rebecca Riter

Coming to Grace

Come to me
and don't wear that face
rung and taunted like your
grandmother's laundry
Come to me
and know that I put my ear before my head.
I am willing to live inside your questions and confessions,
willing I am to sit the sunset with you afterward.
Come to me
because I need
my ear, shoulder, heart.
Come to me
because you love
my ear, my shoulder, and my heart.
You haven't a word that could pound the three
into one.
I have no anger for words,
only mercy for words' movements.
Come to me with that face
meek and mild like your grandmother taught you.
You will still be saved by my ear, my shoulder, my heart.

Kelley Bryant

Leaves fall from trees.
secrets unravel.
Tears blur my vision,
the view is clear.

Alagi Patel

Why Does My Life So Often Feel

Like a city smothered
by darkness and sprinkled with moonlight?
And I stand on the bottom beside the concrete
where the water chases after me and escapes below my feet.
When I look up
I see places where you
poked a hole for me to see
moonlight
That moonlight where you came down on me.
Why do you keep me so locked up?

Oh! How you manipulate me with your words
Everyday
My world falls into its black coma,
I put on my armor and wait
for words aimed like missiles
toward my heart.
When I rise
I rise with all integrity,
prepared to make you feel me.
But I fall -- a heap
of breathlessness. Your words
still tear like arrows through ocean waves.
I cannot rise to you again. It's been too long
since your words of love
blanketed me before sleep.
And in my last drop of despondency
I mutter two words
I thought I would never say:
I can't ...

Gina Doucette

The Promise

A babe was born and a leaf unfurled.
New life was brought into the world.

Strange is it not, the way things go,
Seasons and life have a parallel flow.

The leaf turns green, and a babe full grown,
Nature and man have reaped what was sown.

The autumn years, the body bent,
The leaf is curling, its glory spent.

The spirit mellows, the leaf turns gold,
Nature and man, growing old.

The winter chill blasts, fells the leaf,
A man lies down in eternal sleep.

Tears are shed for life has flown,
The tree is bare, it stands alone.

The snow falls softly, the world is still,
But nature bends to another will.

Spring will come, new buds burst free,
And leaves of green will crown the tree.

And message is clear, is it not?
The answer to all is plainly wrought:

The seasons of life continue to be,
The promise is there, the bright green of the tree!

Patricia Chase

Your love has gone;
the night has fallen
through the darkness.
Summer begins.

Daphne Mompoint

Little Brother

I see your vivid eyes dream-filled
as I listen to the ignition in your voice on the phone.
Your excitement sparks as you become eighteen.

Days ago your were my little brother,
imagination strong, eyes dangerously gullible,
Hot Wheels and Tonkas with added pretend sounds.
I loved how I could feel sorry for your naiveté,
your carefree five years, rolling on the sandy earth.
Simple, you needed no
pampering. That made it
easier for me. Complicated, you had to be
who you were, requiring
my anger when at nine you came to me,
revealed your discovery of a bad friend's porno.
At sixteen, you were driven by life itself.
At seventeen, you confided in me: cigarettes, booze, aimless cruising.
At eighteen, you were almost conceited with girls
you nearly ran into me with your growth
until it hit me:
I wanted to capture you
like I once imprisoned
butterflies in a jar. Keep you innocent and soft.
Keep you out of the sand, safe
From scarring, tribulations.
Your perfection does not require it --
But fueled, charged, running
your questions and need to breathe burns for it
and under the hood
body of polished metal, sleek as a Monte Carlo
interior plush plum, supple leather trimmings.

Simple pleasures made you
Your spirit gave you
Engine purring to life, windows open
I watch you drive
away.

Alagi Patel

My Pledge of Allegiance

Yes, I will speak of darkness.
I will sing its praises until the
Temperance of life
Is no more.
I will stand alone or with your
Unborn legs and speak through
Your voice, still unformed.
Until they see you as more than
A backdrop for stars
Or a prefix for magic, market, ball
Or the dirt of the earth, the devil
In the crow.
I will speak of darkness until it
Suffocates my mouth with a
Fullness that erupts
Into your minds.
I will speak of its glory until it
Reclaims my
Voice.

Natasha Cornin

Boston, the city of culture
you will always be
where haughtiness and class
drip from the tree.

Magdalene McKenzie

The Puppet Show

You used to be
My better half.
From playing in the sandbox
To growing boobs
We progressed through life, always
In step. One never
Surpassed the other.
Our mothers made sure of that.
Though there came a time
When I had to leave
Our tiny world
Of warmth and protection.
I didn't want to leave you
Behind
But our tiny world
Suffocated the life
From underneath my skin
Until I felt like a mere
Puppet strung along in
This show we call
Life.

It was not your fault,
My blue-eyed, curly haired
Friend. We both know it was
Our mothers tangling our strings.
So I broke away and became
A real live girl.
I hear that next week you will
Marry. I would confess
My happiness for you
But I cannot. Look above
And see the face
Of your mother. Look at her
Fingers and see --
They are tangled. You still have your
Strings. And you will never be
a real live girl.

Gina Calderoni

NOTES FROM A DAUGHTER TO HER FATHER

In my memory the front door creaks open and I see my father coming from home work. I am sitting on the floor with a big wooden spoon in my right hand. I have pots and pans and a few plastic containers sprawled out in front of me. I am making music: I believe that I am a wonderful entertainer. I have my loyal audience: my cat Pumpkin sitting near me watching the movement of my spoon, my dog Daisy tilting her head as my music fills the kitchen. In the living room my older sister, annoyed with my instrumental talents, plays with her Barbie dolls, while my mother stands in the kitchen cooking dinner. When my father comes in he has the same routine as every other night. He walks to the refrigerator, takes a Coors beer, and disappears into the living room to watch T.V.

When I was five, I loved my father with all my heart. Just for the simple fact that he was my father. He was the man in my life. I looked up to him for everything, for answers and for questions. To me he could do no wrong. I was impressionable and life was simple. I really didn't think about the world that surrounded me. What five-year old would?

During the week I stayed with the baby-sitter until my mother picked me up. I became so excited when the clock would come close to 3:30. I heard the car as it rolled up the driveway; I knew the sound by heart. When my mom came in the door I went running to her, and I hugged her with all my strength. It is hard to explain, but a mother has a special touch, and when she hugged me I could feel all the love pouring out of her heart.

Looking back, one day stands out. I come home and in a few hours I can smell supper: the smell of steak and potatoes fills the air. The aroma makes my mouth water and I rub my tummy to show my mom my approval. After supper my sister and I decide to go down the basement to play. We went down there when we sensed my father becoming upset. He had a short temper and we saw it too much. Now in the cold and musty basement my sister and I get out the dusty encyclopedia from the corner. We decide to become creative and set up a maze. We ran through it and whoever knocks over any of the books loses the game. As the door opens we look up the wooden stairs: we know this means trouble. Above us on the stairs hang heavy iron hooks. One holds our winter coats and bags, another holds my father's heavy black leather belt. My sister and I have seen and felt this belt a lot. At this moment, the door creaks open and my father picks up the belt. He sets the buckle and he makes the belt snap. Frightened, I look at my sister and I feel her grab my hand. Her own hand is sweaty and she squeezes it so tight. My father calls to us, "Renee, J., get up here now!" My heart beats fast, like race horses are trampling over it. Hesitant, we walk up the stairs and hear them creak one step after another..

That night my sister and I go to bed crying. I have my protector Daisy with me. I will not ler her leave. I pat her soft fur to calm myself down. I feel my warm tears roll down my cheek. In the moring I awaken to find my mother putting my clothes into a suitcase. I notice that her left eye is bruised. Later, with my hot pink Barbie suitcase in my hand I walk out through the doors to my aunt's house. And I never return.

Over the years I have realized what kind of man my father was. He was evil and selfish and cared about no one else. Not even his own flesh and blood. To this day my sister and I do not speak to the man we are supposed to call "father." He has made it perfectly clear that he wants nothing to do with us. Just this year he moved to Arizona and didn't tell my sister and me. We had to hear it from an aunt. I will never forget about the events that have happened to me over the years, but from these experiences I have grown a strength that can never be taken down. And for that I thank him.

Anonymous

Fortress of Red

The cricket stands on the bowed roof
Giving directions as it spins with the wind
The alarming chirp of its metal hinges.
I hear my brother talking to the goat
A language
Of hay and grains and four-legged things.
Impatient, I tug at my Superwoman suit.
Tempted to unlatch the rotten wooden gate
And enter the pasture.
To smell the fresh manure
And taste the dust of hooves
As they dart by me, frightened and nervous
And my brother mumbles nonsense to the goats.
I would run barefoot through the cool grass
and seize his hand
Goats wandering behind their shepherd.
Bleating like mad and leaping into the hot summer air.
If I am lucky I can take one by the horns
And swing up onto its back.
I dream of lazy days in the barn.
Streams of sunlight painting stripes on the hay bails
through loose boards and dirty windows
We could fill water pails and feed bags,
Muck the stalls, polish leather leads and collars
My thin wrists submerged in buckets of warm water
Greased with the heavy scent of oil soap.
I try to grasp the oversized metal lock.
My fingers barely palm the latch.

Janna Panall

ANXIETY

The wooden chair.

My small hips slide in so perfectly like the brown bars were designed specifically for me. And in the chair I will stay, right there at the end of the table. My big porcelain plate holds pepper steak that stares right back at me, tempting me to eat it. I hear my brother and sister, Tommy and Jenny, outside with the neighborhood children in the big box of sand. I hear the squeaking of the big brown box of sand outside. Kristy yelps with joy as she makes her way down. Shadrach barks his pint-sized bark as Jenny throws the ball. It rolls over to the sliding glass door that reflects sunlight onto my face. They both laugh at me. The dog and the sun are both in on it. Daddy must have told them about my punishment.

I look back at the pepper steak. Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad, but I must have been here an hour and I can't possibly give in now. Daddy's pacing again. The thuds of his frantic steps cause my ears to ring. When I close my eyes I can see his loafer sinking into the thick, orange carpeting down the hall. He must be having trouble closing an account. The phone slams down onto the hook. Just one more night of moping, groaning, pouting. And at least three more hours for me.

The clocks ticks. The wallpaper comes alive. Flowers of purple fade and distort into the green background. Faces come out of the blur of rainbow, like little trolls who chants: "Three more hours, three more hours!" They smile at the fact that they can torment me and my little brain.

The sunlight begins to fade. Mommy comes into the room with a basket of laundry in hand. Smiling, she asks, "Daddy still has you stuck in here?" She pulls my plate from underneath me. Salvation comes over me as I see those pieces of steak disappear into the garbage can. The wooden bars release me.

But the sun has gone down. Jenny, Tommy and Shadrach are all on their way in. The glow of the street light sneaks through the drapes. All the neighborhood children have made their way home.

For the rest of that night I could feel those wooden bars tightly in place around my small body.

Michelle Ganos

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